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THE KESHEQUA TRAIL

BY THE BARD OF THE
KESHEQUA VALLEY

The Indian trails along our rivers and rivulets,
many of them one thousand years old,
lead to our principal cities
and our loveliest
villages

DEDICATED
To the Amateur Indianologists
of the Keshequa
Valley

NUNDA, NEW YORK
1908



Hoskesio,
"he wields a
tomahawk"
King of Mundão

N7K4
K.K., Sept. 15/10

THE KESHEQUA TRAIL.

By the Bard of the Keshequa.

Oh who can retrace the Keshequa Trail
That led through the woods to the river,
And the sycamore trees that welcomed the breeze
That made their leaves glitter and quiver ;
The trail and the sycamores too
I no longer can find them, can you?

O'er the Keshequa Trail, if traditions avail,
Many a race of red braves in succession
Have passed toward the river with bow and with quiver
In war paint and feather, regardless of weather,
To drive out the tribe in possession,
For war was their chosen profession.

Satanas, pray tell us, who 'twas drove away
The Fort building giants of old?
Colossal their stature, their skeletons say
They were giants, and doubtless were bold.
As they sit in their palace like mound,
Where can their lost story be found?

Then the Kah-Kwas or Neutrals grew proud of their might
And the proud queen, two Senecas slew,
Quick marshaled in might every brave for the fight,
They sped down our trail where the three streams unite,
Ere the foe of her strategy knew
All must perish who came into view.

But Winona, a maid of the Neutrals, 'twas said,
Loved a chief at Can-a-dah-gua,
And her heart did not fail as she took the short trail
To her far distant lover away.
Ah, Queen, Love is stronger than Hate!
In an ambush the Senecas wait.



WINONA

Leaving six hundred slain at old Chen-nus-sio
The Kah-Kwas sped back o'er the Keshequa trail
To the Queen and her people, all maddened by woe,
To their strong fort they fled, for they there could not fail.
Soon the fort the Nundaos invest,
And the Queen yields up all but the west.

Our valley, reclaimed from the envious Queen,
Was given direct to the lover
Of Winona, the maid, whose fleetness I ween,
Had enabled the chief to recover;
So by council of State, they voted both great
And worthy the love of each other.
They called the New Kingdom Nundah,
The whole length of the stream Keshequa.

All along the fair plain from the hills on the south
And the hills on the east, to the Keshequa's mouth
Where the hills come together and down the great river,
Till the streams meet together, and their waters forever
Are mingled as onward they flow
To the great Lake On-ta-ri-o.

Oh Eries once mighty, and valorous too,
With home by the Great Inland Sea!
Was it you with your legions of warriors true
The Masa-wo-mekes, that with terror oppressed,
All the tribes by the Great-East-Salt-Sea?
Was it you that the Mound Builders slew,
And the Mastodons killed, was it you?

Is it true, you in pride no timidity knew,
But laid claim to the Keshequa Valley,
Ventured near the broad valley, where thousands could rally,
From the far-famed Chen-nus-sio.
Ah! you woke the proud Seneca's wrath,
Changed his hunting trail to a warpath!



Ah! fierce did the Nunda-wa-ono resent
Thy temerity born of thy pride;
To the central camp fire of the warchief he sent
For three thousand braves, his two thousand beside;
To exterminate all in a day,
Or drive them forever away.

But the Great Sunrise Hill, east of Keshequa's rill
With its moose, elk and deer, wolves and bear,
Was too rich a treasure to be yielded at pleasure;
Of its treasures you claimed a full share.
And so with your four thousand braves
You fought hill and valley to save.

But the Senecas knew, with such neighbors as you,
That their life would be one ceaseless strife.
One must perish from view—not enough to subdue—
Ah! Eries, that strife cost thy proud race its life!
Great race that all other foes slew!
Where! Where! is their vestige of you?

In the village Nundao was born Ho-ske-sa-o
Grandson of Winona, a chieftainess then,
'Twas not by the river, nor stream, but between them,
Just where it commanded both river and glen.
There in peace lived the Chief and his Queen,
Near the springs that now only are seen.

When the youth grew to be so skillful that he
Was of young men the pride, and of warriors the talk,
They gave him a name, that best told of his fame,
Ho-ske-sa-o! he wield's best the tomahawk!
And none dare his prowess to mock,
Who wielded the bright tomahawk.

Years pass, the Kah-Kwas form allies, grew bold
And insulted the Senecas too, we are told.
This time, unannounced, they strike a quick blow,
Routed warriors, but failed their foes to pursue,
And as hastily back to their fortress withdrew,
*Sho-ri-ho-wane, the mighty war chieftain, they slew
The Iroquois great Counsel Chief,
And great was the Five Nations' grief.



KENJOCKETY—"BEYOND THE MULTITUDE."

Last, but not least, of a pre-historic race,
Its mighty past lives in this firm, strong face;
'Twere sacrilege one furrow to erase,
Judged by his time, his race, his habitude.
What shall we call thee: manly, true or good?
The past knew best—"Beyond the Multitude."

*This Kah-Kwa Chief was born before the Revolutionary War and died during the Civil War—
over 100 years old.



THE ANGRY KESHEQUA

Revenge for the loss of their great chieftain, cost
The loss to the foe of their chiefs and their nation,
For with blow after blow did young chief Nun-da-o
Dispatch their chief warriors of skill and of station.
The old chief with his son led the way,
But both perished at last in the fray.

But the fortress was won by the chief and his son,
And the victory gained so complete,
That some youths of the nation were spared immolation,
If in strength they with men could compete.
Among them, all statements agree,
Was the grandsire of "Kenjockety."

Again peace and plenty with game, fruit and corn,
Reigned from river to the Keshequa's mouth,
When a scout from afar brought the news of a war
Far away in the land of the south.

Help your kin, the kind Tuscarora,
The potato race, Shones-chion-rono.

Cherokees and Choctaws combine in their might
Against the tribe of the peaceful Potatoe,
So the Bear and the Tortoise equipped for the fight
Were led forth by the young Hoskesao,
Who was now the war chief of Nundao,
They drove back the oppressors from the Patuxents mouth
And brought north the tribe of Potatoe,
And one clan came to live at Nunda-o.

For Ho-ske-sao, with his tomahawk bright
Made the rivers that flowed to the sea
Run red with the blood that was poured like a flood
From Choctaw and fierce Cherokee,
And Cusick, the Schones chief, with glee
Praised his prowess, to fair Onnolee.

And when they came back o'er the Keshequa Trail,
After leaving the broad Genesee,
His courage won the love of the rare southern dove,
For the valiant in love never fail;
And he wed the bright maid Onnolee,
His treasure brought back from the sea.

* When the French Jesuits first came into the interior of New York, they were present at the burial of Sho-ri-ho-wane — near Ge-nunde-wah near Canandaigua, about 1550.

A WELSH LEGEND

There's a legend you know of the dim long ago,
That young Madoc, a Welsh Prince of station
Established a town, ere Columbus first found
San Salvador's Isle for his Nation.

They were merged with the Indian race
But no one has marked out the place.



Upper Falls & Bridge from W. Bank

A Welsh preaching divine, centuries after this time,
Was a captive awaiting the stake,
Though sadly afraid, prayed in Welsh for the aid
And asked it for Jesu's own sake.
- Oh the power of this great name to save
From the terrors of death and the grave!

His good prayer was heeded for the aid he so needed,
For his foes knew the language sublime,
And the message divine, of their forefather's time,
Was one that their ancestors heeded;
For the God that the Welsh captive knew
Was the God of these Indians too.



ONNOLEE

And thus it is thought, through this fusion of blood
And many strange Welsh innovations,
“Hi-a-wa-tha” was born, who taught them to raise corn
And grow fruit and make good habitations,
And their villages built on the plain,
And have gardens, with †gourds fruit and grain.

When Hoskesao, with his bride Onnolee,
Came unto the fruitful Nunda-o,
With warriors more than they ere had before,
They called the place now O-non-da-o,*
For 'twas greater in everything
And Winona's grandson they called King.

And the King chose the father of Queen Onnolee,
As his counsel chief, wise and sedate,
And he placed the “Schone” village in front of a hill
That is full of rocks of the nature of slate.
They called the new village Nundow,
For the Hill was in front of it now.

And Villages grew by the Keshequa Trail,
And some up the dark Genesee,
And new ones there grew, if traditions are true,
For none dare this sachem assail.
Dio-westa was built by the shore
Where the Genesee's cataracts roar.

Nundey is forgot, but the name goes to show
Where small hills into narrow vales fall,
Here they made hickory bows, and with blow upon blow
Sent out piles of flint chips, making arrows.
'Tis easy the spot to define,
The knowl by the old County Line.

A half century ago these flint chips could be seen
As wheat kernels tiny and small,
For a pioneer youth, and this is no dream,
Struck fire from these flints till his giddy thoughts gleamed
With visions of Indians, painted and tall,
Eagle feathers, tomahawk, bow and arrow and all,
Who once lived on this knowl, and haunted the spot.
These thoughts make the Bard still feel chilly.
'Twas in Nundey he lived—which means "hilly."

And thus we connect the far past of this place
With the race of our red predecessors,
Till the white man advanced the dreaded pale face
And became to this race a transgressor,
For white men were like leaves on the trees,
These white races from over the seas.

They came from the east, from the north and the south,
Came nearer each year as the forests they clear,
They follow the streams to their source from their mouth,
Their fire sticks brought death and wrought fear.
The French came across the great sea,
And laid claims to the vale Genesee.**

'Tis a joy to the red man to fight any foe,
 It matters but little whether kindred or stranger,
 Who boasts or intrudes or is insolent rude
 Will soon find his own life in danger,
 But none as an ally more true
 And this Dutch and Britain soon knew.

* O-Signifies Great at beginning or end of word and the change from
 "Nun" to "Non" signifies that its Sachem was a war chief of the whole
 Five Nations

† Indians and the French call squashes and pumpkins, gourds.

**Count de la Bar, in 1687.

PART II

THE WAR WITH THE COLONISTS AND THE WARRIORS FROM NUNDA

Half a century later a war cloud arose,
 The Colonists sought independence to gain;
 The Five Nations and British were "bound by a chain"
 Whose silver links, welded by gifts, must remain.
 The Colonists now became foes,
 For the treaty chain few dare oppose.

Come down said the Briton, come down in your might,
 And see how your allies, the Red Coats, can fight!
 Smoke your pipes, just look on from the hillside o'er head,
 And when the rash rebels are routed or fled
 Let your young braves learn war, scalping wounded and dead!
 Come Red Braves our Allies; our Brothers!
 See how White Men make war on each other!

And all the red braves on the Keshequa Trail,
 And some of the Schones from Nundow
 Came down to the vale, in the two mile wide dale
 As to feast, or war dance or pow-wow,
 But Cusick the Schone said, these men would be free,
 Let the Whites fight it out; I will guard Onnolee.

THE BATTLE

At Fort Stanwix (now Rome) two long days' march from
home,

The Seneca braves heard the musketry rattle,
For to their surprise they were up to their eyes
In the fiercest part of the battle.
To the Senecas this was not sport,
While their allies were safe in the fort.

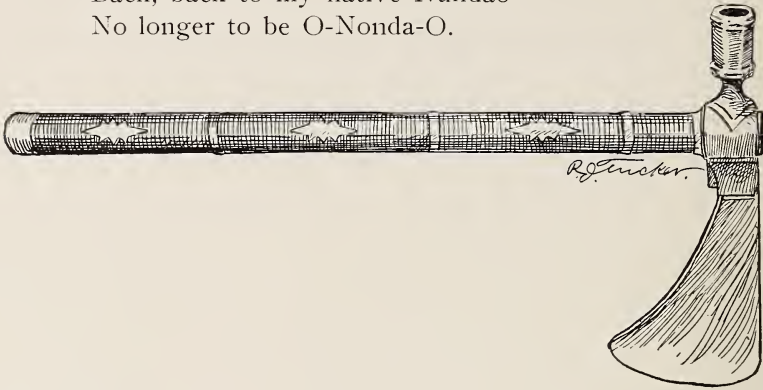
The loud cannons' thunder, the musketry's rattle,
The shooting sticks' fire, that left a man dead.
Was this what the white men call a great battle,
What chance had a chief in this shower of lead?
Use your arrows and do your best work!
Behind trees the Oneidas now lurk.

White men with red coats are fighting white men,
With guns in the hands of each other,
While red men are shooting arrows of death
At their own former "cousins" and "brothers."
And what are we fighting to gain?
The King's power—our lands to obtain.

Seek the trees for a fort, if this be war sport,
The large ones, the thunder balls, cannot cut down.
Were we fighting for home, papooses and squaws,
'Twere an honor to die in such glorious cause.
Strength and prowess here cannot avail—
A youth with a gun, a sachem could quail.

What good is this tomahawk, bloodless to-day,
With its record of hundreds of lives,
The hundreds of dead, who this morning were gay,
Are staring reproach in my eyes.
A chained lion I stand, though brave men I command.
While young daws are plucking my eyes,
Lead me hence! I am sped!
'Twas a ball plowed my head,
It's my life blood that's blinding my eyes.

Back, back to Nundao, it must not be said
That one King for another lost the scalp from his head.
Though he rules half the world, sits in state on a throne,
I sat in my hut, ruled in your hearts alone;
Back, back to my native Nundao
No longer to be O-Nonda-O.



PART III

THE KESHEQUA TRAIL—THE LAMENTATIONS ON THE RETURN—CORNPLANTER, THE HALF-BREED, ASSUMES COMMAND—HIS LAMENT.

Lift, lift up your chieftain, and bear him away
To the banks of the great Chennisee,
To his own Onnolee, his spouse, from the sea,
To his kingless kingdom, his joy and his pride,
To the Paradise Vale he won for his bride,
In his youth, in the far south countrie.

Away, away to the Keshequa Trail!
Away from this useless slaughter,
Let the red coats fight, and the red coats fail,
For what will their victory or failure avail
To the mothers of these who stiffen and freeze,
Or to sister, or wife or daughter.

Away! away! though the silver chain break
That has lasted a hundred years;
Not a hair of his head shall a foeman take,
We will not our valorous King now forsake,
For Onnolee's tears are more precious by far
Than all the rich jewels, though costly and rare,
In the crown of the white king afar.

Back, back to our hills! and back to our plains!
Let the pale face flash death at his cousins and brothers!
We must care for our widows, and sisters, and mothers,
Take with you, each one, of the dead that remains,
And some day bring back to Nundao,
For only the King we can take with us now,
The Iroquois war chief Hoskesao.

Hid away in a thicket—away from the strife,
They hastily buried the ill-fated braves
That had given their all in giving their life
For a king who but ranked them as slaves,
Quick made they a litter and bore the king back
O'er the trail they but yesterday trod,
But many that came, so blithe o'er the track,
Were now sleeping under the sod.

They rested near morning at Ge-nun-de-wah,
But with daylight were again on the track,
Fleet "Sharpshins" was sent up the Keshequa trail,
To the queen and the women, to quickly bring back
Royal robes and best litter, that the king might not fail
To reach his estate, as only the great
Take their way to the Great Spirit Land,
Where again they resume their command.

Few were the words that were spoken
On the swift march or bivouac at night,
But their sighs and low moans betoken
What was speechless or hidden from sight.
They rested at Chennussee, long the "west door,"
And here full many a dusky chief his sachem did deplore.

While waiting for Queen Onnolee to lead the funeral train,
And bear their chieftain, robed in state, across his wide
domain,

To bury him with his fathers on the plain in fair Nunda,
With all who for a century had passed from them away.
With litter clad in richest furs and panther skin on him,
His tomahawk was in his hand, and his scalping knife so
trim,

His bow inlaid with gems and pearls was fully six feet long,
His arrows like his bow string were choice as well as strong,
Magnificent his figure and strong his regal face—

In very truth the *Ongua-hiongua of his race,
For his arrows sped the swiftest, and their target never
missed,

But this Goliath may have perished by a stripling colonist.

* Without an equal



RED JACKET

RED JACKET'S LAMENT

Our greatest has fallen, what words can describe him,
Mighty in council, mighty in battle,
Mighty where arrows leave dead, but no wounded,
Mighty where tomahawk cleaves head and shoulder,
Mighty to conquer, but tender to welcome
The young, red or white, who may prove a great brave.

Oft have we seen him hurl death and destruction
Into the ranks of the strongest and bravest,
None could withstand his great strength and prowess,
In hand to hand warfare, though assistants were many,
Quick were his blows, quicker still to recover,
His tomahawk dripping with blood of his foe.

Another goes down, followed still by another,
None now dare withstand him after so many
Had perished beneath his immense tomahawk,
But gentle in peace, to all men a brother,
He fought whenever the "Grand Counsel" commanded.
Great chief, 'twere an honor to follow thy leading,
'Tis honor to serve thee, though lifeless and dead,
Words are too small to tell of thy valor,
Words are too weak to tell of our love.

ELK HUNTER SPEAKS*

Great Chiefs and Warriors, I have bid my tongue
Keep silence while the wise spoke to my heart,
But the heart's silence is beyond my power,
If it speak not, 'twill break. You've lost your king,
Your loss is great, but you can choose another.
Where can a son find again a father's love
Whose loss is like the loss of me, his only son?
Let my heart speak its tribute,
Ere the words be washed away.

Alas, thrice, alas! for the bravest and best
The great hero king of Nundao
Is shot through the head! Oh, alas, he is dead!
O best of thy race Ho-ske-sa-o!
The wound in his head is a wound in my breast,
This heart wound, how can it be dressed?
Alas for the dead from the Keshequa's Vale!
Alas for all those from the Beautiful Valley! †
What could tomahawk arrows or prowess avail
In this thunder of cannon and musketry's rattle,
This hell-fire, death-dance, called a battle.

On whom shall the Nundahos' vengeance now rest,
On those we call allies, or the Oneidas our brothers,
Or on the pale faces these Oneidas now aid?
Who buy all we sell, just as well as the others?
My heart is divided,—which is right,—what is best?
What Elk Hunter should do—I leave to the rest.

* He lived at Nunda in 1780

† Indian name for the Genesee Valley

THE KAH-KWA, HALF BLOOD, SPEAKS

My race were called Neutrals, and while they chose peace
They were happy, and prospered, and yearly increased,
Then they dug up the hatchet, and gave blow for blow,
But who can contend with invincible foe?
The sons of their captives, as Nundahos remain,
All the rest in a wild frenzied battle were slain.
The same lesson confronts us, a lesson that's plain,
Live in peace with the men who have cannons and guns!
Live in peace or your Nation though valiant will cease.

A TUSCARORA CHIEFTAIN SPEAKS

Let me, the Queen's kin, voice my sister's distress
And the great loss befalling Elk Hunter, her son,
'Tis Seneca law, that no son may possess
Any power or place that his father has won—
Except so decreed at the Great Council place—

I'm a Schone, so is he, he belongs to his mother,
And the chief's place belongs to his nephews or brothers.
But chief he shall be of the race from the Sea,
So I give half my lands in my village Nundah
On the banks of the murmuring Keshequa,
To Elk Hunter and our Queen Onnolee.

ELK HUNTER REPLIES

Your royal gift, my brother, melts my heart,
And makes the frozen tear drops, rising, start;
I'll take your gift, but give the smaller part.
(Onnolee approaches; Elk Hunter goes to meet her.)

BIG TREE SPEAKS

The Queen draws near, let words of sorrow cease,
Sit in encircled silence, let none see
The meeting of the living with their dead.
The breaking heart is saved by flood of tears,
Give heart and nature, nature's remedies,
Time, tears and words—then sympathy and praise.

ONNOLEE TO ELK HUNTER

My son, we have each other and our dead
And pleasant recollections of the past,
To us he was the greatest that we knew,
But we lived in the love others but shared.
They honored him as chief, as warrior, man,
Heeded his words, his wishes and commands,
They prove their love for him by courtesy to us,
They recognize our right to be with him alone,
And drown our choking grief with words and tears,
We must remember we are not alone
In this calamity that's come to all.
A hundred wives, of husbands are bereft,
Hundreds of children mourn their father's slain,
We share with them, and they with us, this loss;

But ere we join with them in lamentation,
I have a mother's word to say to you.
Would you were younger and had not tasted blood
Or shot an arrow at a human mark,
But just as you were a few suns ago,
Only a hunter youth, whose proudest wish
To bring to me the game thy skill had gained.
And now that we are lonely and bereft,
Would let us live in some sequestered nook,
With hut by singing brook, with forest shade,
Till this vast but unnatural war is done,
In which no red man has a chance to win
And every red man has a chance to die.
Why should our kindred be estranged from us
While we aid white men? We, alas, fight them,
And they must fight us, who but yesterday
Had lived our lives in love and harmony,
Fighting for those who covet all we have,
Life, liberty and lands—even this fertile vale.
Your father felt in this as I do now,
That we had all to lose, nothing to gain.
My grief for him is not that he is dead,
All warriors take the chances of their lives,
But that he died in vain—a useless death,
Fighting for those who are at heart our foes,
Fighting against those whose love is sure no less.
My grief for you is greatest, for you live to-day,
To-morrow you may die a useless death
Rather than be thought disloyal or fainthearted.
This is the heaviest weight upon my soul.
Our friends grow restless. They long to tell
Their grief for us, their sorrow and their love.
We must go to them.

(Onnolee approaches and steps into the circle.)
Kindly I thank you for leaving the battle
And bringing "our dead" near his own burial place,
Thank you for honoring him with this pageant
Of brothers and chieftains, the best of his race,

Thank you for remembering that I was a woman,
 And not a stern warrior, who might feel disgraced
 By showing my tears; that my son, too, was human
 And letting his heart's love flow over his face.
 I was his queen, and in his name I thank you,
 I was his wife, and your brotherly love
 Comes as a balm to a heart rudely broken,
 That suffers a grief, all others above,
 But I am a mother, my son, my sole treasure,
 He is barred out by law from taking the place
 Of the King of Nundao; according to usage
 That belongs to a kinsman of his clan and race.
 I do not lament it, nor do I regret it,
 Nor that all of the honor I shared from his place
 Will be given to the wife of him who will follow
 As the wife of the war chief, of the Seneca race,
 My place, your allegiance, whatever of honor
 I have held by position, or held in your hearts
 This we bury to-morrow with the great Hoskesao,
 And in life's humble duties, me and mine take our place.
 I am widow and mother, I ask to remain so.
 As Schones, we can still be loyal and true,
 But can I, with one son, still be a mother
 If this son be taken away from my view?
 I ask that you leave us for a few years together
 To bring venison and fish for my husbandless home,
 In some quiet nook in the Keshequa Valley.
 Let the King's life-of-war for his peace-life atone,
 Remember, brave chiefs, I'm only a woman,
 And woman's bruised heart will break left alone.
 Little Beard Junior Chief came not to Nundao,
 He loves "Brant and the Tories" more than Ho-ske-sa-o.*
 The sun is fast sinking and now we must go
 Up the Keshequa Trail to our sad Nundao,
 Where in two days from now we shall mourn Ho-ske-sa-o,
 The times big with birth, of new sachems and slaughter,
 Leave these sad burial rites to Cusick sad daughter.

*The Tuscororas speak less harsh than the Senecas.

Of Cusick our late Council Chief I must tell
Of what but yesterday befell.
He was indeed our trusted Council Chief,
He was not Seneca, but Schone,
He knows and trusts in Washington.
His counsel was that we should neutral be
And not fight for the king across the sea,
His heart is more for peace than it is for war,
And so he's gone to be interpreter
To the Great White Chief down by the sea.
He bids me say to you, he risks your hate
To be in time of need your advocate,
And when this white chief's cause is won
As he believes, that day will surely come,
Then will he say to this great Washington,
All men are equal, shall we not agree
We'll share with you our lands—we share your liberty.
Do not condemn him as a traitor then,
He'll shoot no arrows at his daughter's friends.

TALL CHIEF

Our sister has spoken, her heart is o'er flowing
With her fears for the living, her grief for the dead.
The future is dark, it is true there's no knowing
Which warriors will triumph,—which conquered and fled,
Chief Cusick has chosen to call himself neutral,
As most of his nation has chosen to be.
It is best for us all that he's chosen a station
Where his words will have weight when we seek liberty.
Should his grandson decide to comfort his mother
For a few years to come, till her heart shall be strong,
Let us grant for the sake of the bruised heart so torn,
And in gratitude to the great one we now mourn,
To leave him in charge of the camps in the valley
When the Nundao warriors for battle shall rally,
What Tall Chief has here spoken he will say to the rest.
Sister, we leave you, to go to the council;
In the care of Elk Hunter may your spirit find rest.

LAMENT OF QUEEN ONNOLEE

And Onnolee, the widowed one, came up the historic trail
As one whose grief had but begun, her tears of no avail,
Yet tried she still to comfort all, for grief filled every heart,
His people, and his fair domain, seemed of himself a part.
A child of nature, she could see beauty in hill and nook and
tree,

To these she spoke as if they mourned for him who went,
but ne'er returned,

So close she lived to nature's heart, all things she loved with
her took part.

O, fairest valley how you smiled on me, his bride, when first
we met,

Your charm my youthful heart beguiled,

You won my love, you have it yet,

Like bird's nest built in apple tree,

The wooded hills encircled thee.

And all who lived in this safe nest

Felt naught but joy, none knew distress.

To-day your look is sad, no longer gay,

Has all your glory also passed away?

Blythe, dancing, sparkling Keshequa,

Have you, too, changed your being's law,

This dirge like chanting undertone?

Is it for him, for him alone,

Or for all those who were once your boys,

Shared all your treasures, all your joys,

You miss them all—your heart is sore,

Your dirge says, gone—forevermore,

For-ev-er-more—for-ev-er-more.

Gone, gone, my boys, forevermore.

Yon circling sun for fifty years has seen

His face in passing, with a smile serene,

When next "it rises o'er yon Sunrise Hill,"

And finds Nundah-o's King is absent still,

And sees the gloom on every warrior's face,

Fearful forboding of a ruined race,

And hears the once blythe Keshequa sobbing loud



THE LAUGHING KESHEQUA

'Twill, 'shamed of smiling, hide behind a cloud,
Like a great chief too proud to own his grief,
Who turns away to find, in solitude, relief.
Add these my sad salt tears to thine,
Our common tribute, yours and mine,
And bear them through the Genesee,
And when you reach the Great Salt Sea,
Near childhood's home of Onnolee,
Then give them to the salt, salt sea
And it will ever, salter be.

Oh! Onondao! named the Great,
It was his greatness made you so,
'Twas he that conquered every foe
And set my captive people free
From Choctaw and from Chickasaw,
'Twas he that made thee something more,
Increased thy cabins to two-score.
So mourn with me ,my loss is thine,
Your greatness, too, like mine, must soon decline.

The loss of King, and many braves
Takes off the O the Nunda saves,
'Twas all of him! Hoskesao,
So I, and you dear Nunda-o,
Must back to our old station go
And share henceforth each others woe.

* * * * *

In two days they buried the chief,
And great was this people's grief;
For the first sachem King of Nundao,
The Confederate's Chief, Ho-ske-sa-o,
And they planted there what was costly and rare,
A banner stone, shapely and large and fair,
No other one known can with this one compare.



BANNER STONE

Found in the grave of the King of Nundao, by L. C. Roberts and
L. F. Willey, amateur Indianologists.



THE LAST COUNCIL OF THE GENESEE

PART IV.

THE COUNCIL OF WOMEN AND WARRIORS AT WHICH ONNOLEE PRESIDES

Come people of Ho-ske-sa-o,
Let me express our mutual woe,
There's naught like age and grief combined
To crush the life, to clog the mind.
I'll voice the woe that rests on you,
I'm old but strong, to speak the grief
That swells my heart, will give relief.

Come wives of all the lesser chiefs
And mourn along with me,
The chief of great Nunda-o's vale,
Come widows all unite to wail
For him who ruled both hill and dale,
King of the western gate was he,
And Prince of the Upper Chenmissee.

Come Pale Face of the Chennissee,
Sit at my left beside of me,
For you have lost, as I have now,
Your heart's first conqueror "She-nin-jee,"
And you can comfort Onnolee.
The Delaware, long gone, I know,
Is with my King, Ho-ske-sa-o.

The Scarlet King, across the sea,
Spoke soft words to our king his brother,
To come and gaze, and smoke and see
How white men fight each other.
And so the king called all together,
From Caracadera, Hillside Fort,
Nundow, its Schones, delighted brought.

All lured to see the red coats crush
The Washton-yans* in one fierce rush,
While Senecas but view the fight
And share the joy and view the flight,
And see how fire sticks deal out woe
Till there should be no rebel foe.
And then our braves for scalps advance,
And prisoners gain for the victors dance.

And so beguiled King Ho-ske-sa-o
Assembled all at O-nonda-o,
And to Fort Stanwix sped away,
And reached it by the second day.
He found his allies safe in fort,
Ready to view the fine war sport
Of matching red man against red man,
While white men too with guns of steel,
Filled with their lightning head and heel
And he the chief, of whom all talk,
What chance to wield his tomahawk!

*Bostonians.

Could he but fought them, hand to hand,
His braves obeying his command,
Had but his allies been more true
And fought as valiant warriors do,
Could every bow and axe and lance
Blazed fire and thunder as they advanced,
Then the Washtonians chance would be
Like those who fight one man to three,
But oh, to face those armed with gun
Is fighting foe that's ten to one.

Does strength or skill or valor count?
When lightning sticks from head and heart,
Send warrior's blood out like a fount,
What chance to send the flinted dart,
Its wounds their medicine man can save,
While the ball of fire kills greatest brave.
So perished our Ho-ske-sa-o,
Killed by this blazing death, our deadliest foe.
Break, break my heart, with all this weight of woe,
For loss of thee, my soul,—Ho-ske-sa-o.



THE WHITE WOMAN DE-HE-WA-MIS

TO MARY JEMISON

White squaw, I've looked upon the face
Of the "Ongue-honge" of the pale face race,
Down by Manhattan on the Sea
I once saw enthroned majesty.
I read his face, an open book,
Saw power and love in every look,
Wisdom and valor in his eye,
As clear and truthful as the sky.
Kind was his glance, with looks of woe,
It lingered on Ho-ske-sa-o.
There was no hatred for our race,
Fatherly love beamed from his face,
As if he would our cause defend
If he were only ally—friend,
And as I gazed on Washington
I felt his cause would yet be won,
I know how Cusick felt, for my own heart was won.

Each great man looked into a great man's face,
The Ongue-honge truly of the other's race.
I read their thoughts unto the very end,
I'd like this great chief for my brother—friend,
If not, with foe like this, a very king,
There'd be great glory in the conquering.

And thus these giants met—and thus they part,
Ho-ske-sa-o grew strangely large of heart
All captives saved if they were strong and young
To dwell in peace the Indians among.
No longer hate and vengeance filled his breast,
His passions fierce were put to rest,
Horatio Jones, at the Old Hill Fort,
Though made to run in death like sport,
Swift as a war steed under spur,
A widow asked that he who run
So brave and well might be her son,
He's now the king's interpreter,
A useful Seneca, a loyal son
Saved from a useless death, from love of Washington.

Who, warriors, now your new war chiefs shall be?
Fifty sad widows' eyes look up to me
For vengeance, shall I say—on every foe?
Like Catherine the fierce Queen of Catherine's Town,
Shall I turn man, and war paint now put on?
And like our angry braves in hate advance,
With war and vengeance dire in every glance?

No this is phrensy, though brave, I am a woman,
And pale faced squaw, like you, I, too, am human,
None, none can be more loyal to our race,
And yet keep hate and vengeance from thy face.
I take and fill his place—I could but fail!
His glance could make the stoutest heart to quail,
His name forsooth! It was no boasting talk
The man of men, who wields the tomahawk.

Who shall succeed him? Warriors do you know
Of any brave as your Ho-ske-sa-o
Who is as wise? Look all around and see—
They've brains, just boy brains, like Kenjockety.

(Onnolee suggests a chief.)

The "Great Chiefs' Council" beside the "Central Fire"
Will soon decide who their War Chief will be;
No doubt, for Little Beard all will agree,
He's brave, ambitious, full of hate and ire,
The "west door" will move down the Genesee
Though here it's been, a hundred years or more;
And oh, my people—mine, alas, no more:
We, too, must follow our great "Western Door";
He'll need us all to make a great display,
Alas for Onondaho and Nunda.

But we can choose of the King's clan a chief,
Be slow in choosing, in decision brief,
There's one I know would never be rejected.
The half-blood Kah-Kwa—the king's sister's son,
Father of this Big Dog (Kenjockety),

For size and strength no warrior can excel.
He favors peace—but in war he will do well;
That we may keep our lands, give him a name to tell
Where all his followers choose henceforth to dwell,
"Keshequa" Chief of the Valley Keshequa
And all the hillside, of our realm Nundah.

**AT THE COUNCIL OF WARRIORS, THE KING'S
NEPHEWS ARE THE CANDIDATES—
GREEN JACKET SPEAKS**

Let there be harmony in all we do:
My Kah-Kwa kinsman has as strong a claim
As I. Why should I ask for preference from you?
Our realm is long and wide, there's room for all;
Let all the Tuscaroras live together;
Elk Hunter and Kill Deer may have them all*
And share in love, their people and their lands.
Let all who choose with "Keshequa" remain,
While I may Cusick's chiefless village claim.
If any choose to go along with me
And call me chief, I'll prove their friend and leader;
This is their right; I ask but this, however, to retain
The name, or part of the ancestral name
Of our illustrious "Hill born race, Nunda,"
And my camp up the river call Nundow;
For a hill fortress fronts my village now;
Let O-nonda-o's glory pass away,
A hundred years is long enough to stay,
Since he who made her great has passed away,
What does Chief Keshequa, my brother, say?

KESHEQUA REPLIES

Green Jacket, Chief of Cusick's town shall be;
He has spoken wisely,—we must all agree,
Our voices, like a song, sound harmony.
Take with him Dio Westa—chiefless, too—
And be the Chief of the Upper Genesee;
And all the friends his youthful friendship knew
Are free to share his fortunes and his fame—

*Elk Hunter and Kill Deer both lived in Nunda when the first settlers came.

It is enough for me to have this valley fair
And on the Sunrise Hill find still abundant game;
Elk Hunter has been, will be still, my friend
And here together may our journey end.

FINALE

Years after when White Settlers sought a home
In the wide valley of the Genesee,
They found at Nunda—as all now agree—
Two village chiefs living in harmony;
Elk Hunter and Green Jacket still lived there
Beside the Keshequa stream—In Valley none more fair.



EAST STREET—THE OLD KESHEQUA TRAIL

In course of time a village with white men,
Attracted by the beauty of this glen,
Built homes and stores and churches many (five),
And schools that for a time did live and thrive
Along this oldest street, the Indian trail,
At last a Bard on East Street wrote this tale
For East Street was a part of this Historic Trail.

EXPLANATORY

The author believes that a thousand years ago the trail
of the Upper Genesee, from Belvedere to the mouth of the

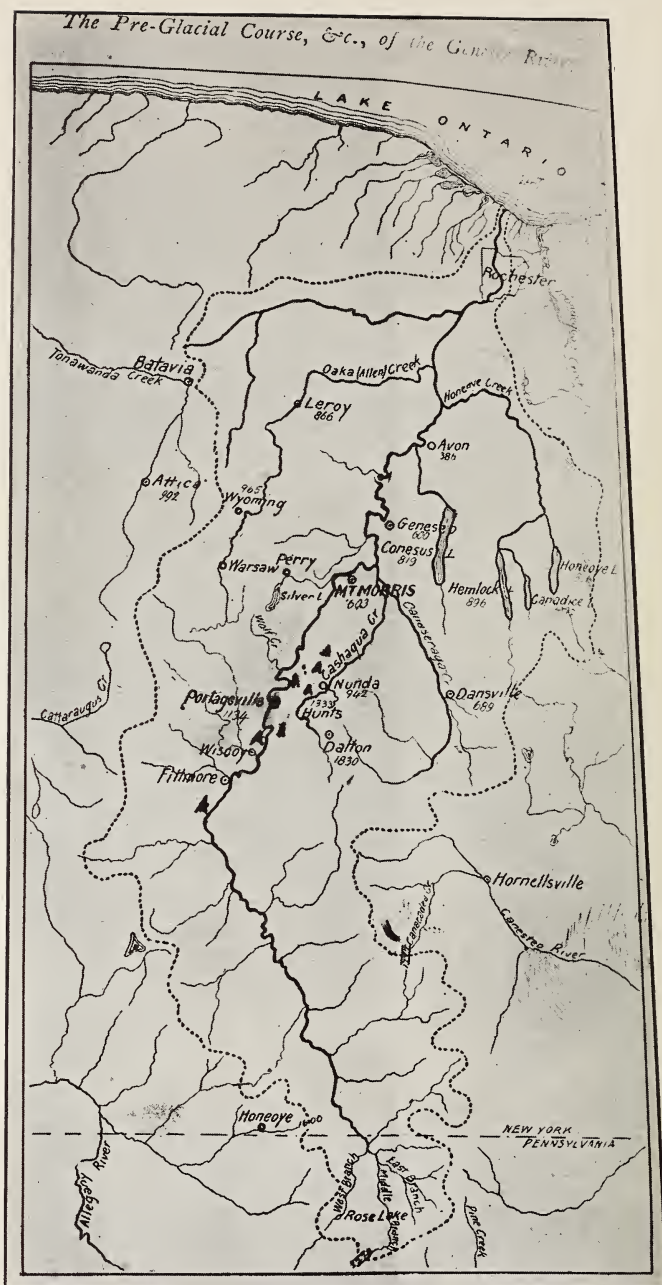
Keshequa, was a section of the trail connecting the Ports of the state from the Upper Genesee to Conesus and to Oswego. That the trail followed the original channel of the Genesee, through the Keshequa Valley, that a lake similar in size to the artificial one that has been under consideration at Portage then existed, and that the Genesee River Gorge has since then been formed. He believe that Onondao was of modern origin, about one hundred years before the Revolutionary War, after the Eries and Kah-Kwas were exterminated, i. e., after 1650. Hohskesahe (pronounced Ho-ske-sa-o) was a real character, for a time the greatest war chief of the Iroquois. The Queen of the Kah-Kwas was a real character, as was the maid whom the author calls Winona. Kenjockety was a real Indian, who lived at Onundao previous to and after the Revolutionary War. Onnolee is a fictitious character, though doubtless the Great Sachem had a wife and son. Cusick, the friend of Washington, completed his life near Buffalo, and his grandsons took part in the Civil War. Elk Hunter, Green Jacket and Kill Deer were real characters. The father of Kenjockety was a chief, but his name is not known. All these lived at Nunda, some as late as 1813. That East Street was a part of the Keshequa Trail is also a fact, and the building of the Nunda House in 1835 blocked up the trail leading to Oakland. The meaning of Keshequa is not exactly known; the laughing or murmuring creek is very near the original meaning.



ELK HUNTER'S HOME ON THE KESHEQUA



WIDENING THE TRAIL



THE BASIN OF THE GENESSEE RIVER WITH INDIAN VILLAGES
IN AND NEAR NUNDA



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